

Open Space, Parks and Recreation

CONTENT OF THESE GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Santa Barbarans have always prized the open space and recreational opportunities found within the city and in nearby Santa Ynez Mountains and coastal waters. Because the city is essentially built out, it is critical to preserve and enhance open space, parks and recreational opportunities.

The following goals, policies and implementation actions were either developed during the *Plan Santa Barbara* General Plan update process, carried over from the Land Use or Housing Elements in effect in 2011, or were EIR mitigation measures. These new goals, policies and implementation actions are operational with adoption of the General Plan, however, until the existing Open Space and Parks and Recreations Elements are comprehensively updated, they also remain in effect and combined with the following.



Goals, Policies and Implementation

GOAL

- ***Open Space Opportunities.*** Protect and enhance the city's livability, accessibility and character, and the community's health, through the generous provision of a variety of accessible public open space opportunities.

Open Space, Parks and Recreation Policies

OP1. **Variety and Abundance.** Provide ample open space through a variety of types, including nature reserves, parks, beaches, sports fields, trails, urban walkways, plazas, paseos, pocket parks, play areas, gardens, and view points, consistent with standards established for this city.

Possible Implementation Actions to be Considered

OP1.1 Park and Open Space Standards and Planning. Establish or update standards for:

- The number of acres for each type of open space per increment of population (e.g., 1,000 residents) appropriate for Santa Barbara;
- Optimal walking distances to parks, recreational areas and gardens, including pocket parks and small play areas; and
- Types of open space, parks or recreational facilities to satisfy different needs, or appropriate in different locations (e.g., multi-purpose pocket park for infill vs. tot lot in single family residential neighborhood) suitable for the demographics of each neighborhood.

Using these service ratio standards, develop accessibility goals, identify facility deficiencies, establish priorities, and determine options for addressing needs, such as through joint use (and funding) of school districts' recreational facilities.

OP1.2 Remaining Key Open Space. Use the information in the Master Environmental Assessment Visual Resource Maps and other data to identify key areas within the City and its sphere of influence that merit long-term protection, and take appropriate actions to preserve such areas as passive open space. Focus on larger areas of contiguous open space including areas in the Las Positas Valley, Elings Park, El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Historic Park, east slopes of Hope Ranch, north Mesa hillsides, the Riviera, and throughout the foothills, particularly in lower Mission Canyon and the watersheds of Arroyo Burro and Barger Canyon creeks, as well as the Atascadero and Cieneguitas creek watersheds adjacent to the San Marcos Foothills Preserve.

- OP1.3 Protect Contiguous Open Land. All new development within identified key open space areas shall be sited and designed to preserve contiguous tracts of open space and connectivity with open space on adjacent parcels. Connectivity includes connected habitats and wildlife corridors.
- OP1.4 Public Lands. As part of the next Recreation Facilities Master Plan Update and/or in each Sustainable Neighborhood Plan, identify all publicly owned vacant or underutilized property (e.g., parking lots, road rights of way, etc.) and assess the potential for conversion of all or a portion of these properties for park, open space, and recreational use, such as pocket or neighborhood park, play area, plaza, public seating area, trail or community garden, habitat restoration, and/or other publicly accessible green space as well as water quality improvement projects.
- OP1.5 Community Gardens on Vacant Land. Establish a program for use of vacant or underutilized properties for temporary community gardens throughout the City, to enable residents who do not have access to land to grow food, orchards or other crops. Community gardens shall not be sited within a creek setback.
- OP2. **Open Space, Park, Recreation and Trails Acquisition and Maintenance Funding.** The City shall develop a variety of ways and options to support acquisition and maintenance of public open space, and new development and re-development shall contribute commensurate with the incremental need generated. Access and connectivity between open spaces shall be considered in future acquisition and maintenance funding.

Possible Implementation Actions to be Considered

- OP2.1 Acquisition Funding. Establish funding mechanisms (e.g., conservation easements, assessment districts) for preservation of key open space areas including Quimby Act and Park Development Fees to reflect the actual costs of providing such facilities, and actively pursue State, Federal, and private grants to enable acquisition.
- OP2.2 Maintenance Funding. Develop funding mechanisms for maintaining public parks, recreational facilities and/or usable open space in the urban center. Require a contribution by all larger projects, towards public parks, recreational facilities, and/or other usable open space on site, off site, or through in lieu fees, to offset the impact of increased density/intensity of use.
- OP2.3 Preservation of Regional Open Space. Coordinate with the County, School District, and recreational service providers of Goleta and Carpinteria on regional open space protection in the Las Positas Valley, foothills, and other areas determined to be appropriate by the City. In particular, work with the County to consider options for:
- Expanding the San Marcos Foothills Preserve by siting and clustering any new development south of the Preserve to set aside steep hillsides and creek corridors as additions to the Preserve. Consider potential options to expand the Preserve northward during any future proposed subdivisions of larger adjacent ranches by considering use of agricultural clustered development or other techniques to permit preservation of larger areas of contiguous open space while permitting reasonable development of such properties.

- Coordinating with the County and private property owners to restore foothills and other lands degraded by past inappropriate grading or agricultural activities.
 - Recreational facilities including ball fields, sport courts, trails and bike paths.
 - Providing linked open space and trail corridors through incorporated and unincorporated areas of the Las Positas Valley and eastern Hope Ranch.
- OP2.4 Acquisition of Existing Buildings for Community Use. Establish funding mechanisms for acquisition of existing buildings and property (e.g. Army Reserve National Guard Armory) for community use or establishment of a new community center.
- OP2.5 Citizen Involvement. Coordinate with interested citizen groups on appropriate conservation and passive recreational activities that should occur in existing and newly acquired open space areas.
- OP2.6 Youth Involvement. Work with local education institutions (e.g. high schools, colleges) and community organizations to foster youth appreciation for and participation in open space protection and management.
- OP2.7 Private Open Space. Coordinate with private landowners on the management and restoration of private hillside lands so that such lands are managed to preserve open space values of significant stands of native vegetation and mature trees. Explore costs and benefits of transfer of such lands to public ownership with willing property owners.



Existing Open Space Element

[Not Updated as Part of this General Plan Update]



Existing Parks and Recreation Element

[Not Updated as Part of this General Plan Update]



Open Space, Parks and Recreation Map

